

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0234

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO INDIAN OCEAN COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, XO, MP
SUBJECT: ROUND IV U.S.- SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN TALKS: MAURITIAN REACTION

REF: STATE 046020

7. DCM BRIEFED RANKING FONMIN OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR INDIAN OCEAN AFFAIRS, DRAWING UPON PARAS 2 AND 3 OF REFTEL. OFFICIAL, WHO HAD REQUESTED BRIEFING SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER, TOOK SPECIAL NOTE OF PARA 3 AND COMMENTED IN SUMMARY THAT WHILE TALKS SEEMED TO BE MAKING PROGRESS AT TECHNICAL LEVEL (I.E., DRAFTING GROUP ACTUALLY WORKING ON TEXT OF AGREEMENT), SOVIET ACTION IN ETHIOPIA AND U.S. REACTION TO IT MIGHT WELL JEOPARDIZE POSSIBILITY OF AN AGREEMENT.

2. FONMIN OFFICIAL THEN PROCEEDED TO EXPRESS HIS CONCERN OVER SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE HORN AND LAMENTED THAT AFRICAN STATES APPEARED IN RATHER HELPLESS POSITION TO DO ANYTHING TO STOP THE HOSTILITIES.

3. COMMENTING ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A GOM-SPONSORED CONFERENCE ON THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, HE SAID THAT THE PERSON WHO SPEARHEADED THE IDEA WAS DEPUTY
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JAMES BURTH DAVID, PRESIDENT OF THE LABOR PARTY, IN ORDER TO STEAL THUNDER FROM A MAURITIAN MILITARY MOVEMENT (MMM)- PROMOTED CONFERENCE ON SAME SUBJECT. FONMIN OFFICIAL SAID THAT IN SPITE OF HIS ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN CLARIFICATION AS TO WHETHER GOM CONFERENCE WAS TO BE A GOVERNMENT- SPONSORED CONFERENCE OR ONE SPONSORED BY THE LABOR PARTY ALONE, THE QUESTION REMAINED UNANSWERED. HE BELIEVED

THAT RESPONSE TO BURTY DAVID'S INVITATION FOR OTHER GOVERN-
MENTS TO SEND PARTICIPANTS HAD BEEN UNENTHUSIASTIC. ALSO
GOALS OF CONFERENCE WERE AS YET UNCLEAR AND APPARENTLY NOT
MUCH THOUGHT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO AN AGENDA. SEEING THIS AND
WANTING TO MAINTAIN SOME CONSTRAINTS ON THE COURSE OF THE
CONFERENCE, THE FONMIN HAD SUGGESTED THAT CONFERENCE RESTRICT
ITSELF WITHIN TERMS OF THE UN RESOLUTION CALLING FOR MAKING
THE INDIAN OCEAN A ZONE OF PEACE. FONMIN HAD EVEN SUCCEEDED
IN GETTING THE PRIME MINISTER TO ADOPT THIS LINE IN A
JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING HIS RECENT OFFICIAL
VISIT TO BANGLADESH. BUT ISSUES TO BE DEBATED AT CONFERENCE
WERE STILL UNDECIDED. HE CONCLUDED THAT CONFERENCE
WOULD PROBABLY NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL FINAL PART OF 1978,
IF THEN, AND THAT UNTIL IT WAS CLEARER WHO WAS SPONSORING,
WHO WOULD BE COMING, AND THE PRECISE AGENDA, NO INVITATIONS
WOULD BE ISSUED TO THE "BIG POWERS"-- THE U.S. SOVIET UNION,
FRANCE, AND U.K.

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